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MY LITTLE BOOK OF LIFE

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OF LIFE
BY
MURIEL STRODE**



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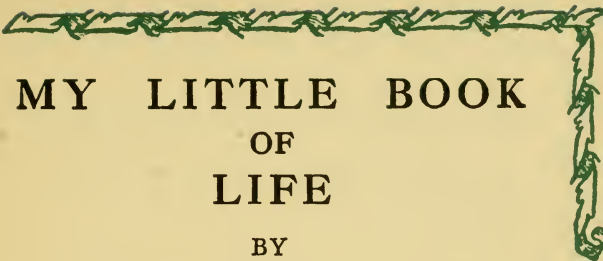
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BY

MURIEL STRODE

I MUST forget self, and yet,
above all things, I must not
forget self.

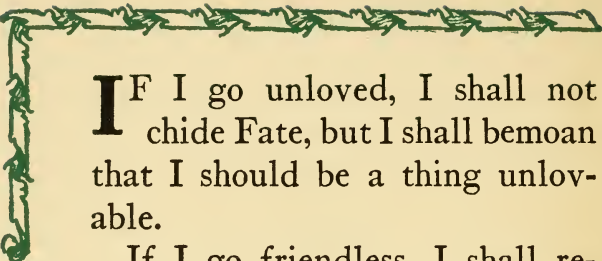
Only he is capable of univer-
sality who adores his own soul.



TO do the thing that counts,
and then not count it!



AN angel's wing beats at every
window, but only the listen-
ing hear and rise.



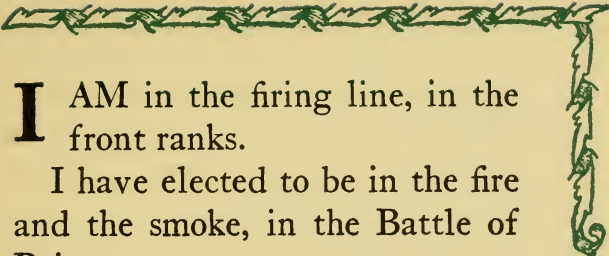
IF I go unloved, I shall not chide Fate, but I shall bemoan that I should be a thing unlovable.

If I go friendless, I shall reproach none, but I shall lament that I have not the attributes of a friend.

If I go uncomforted, the world shall be blameless, but I shall regret that it was in no wise in my debt.



I CANNOT go so far that God will not go with me. I started on my desolate way, and I found that God had strapped on his knapsack, and taken up his staff.



I AM in the firing line, in the front ranks.

I have elected to be in the fire and the smoke, in the Battle of Being.



THERE is a certain look that is mine wherever I find it over the world, in man or beast,—the look of the understanding eye.



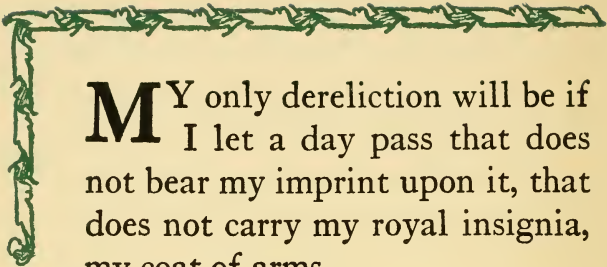
IF you would pass through, you must pass through alone.

The way has ever been a trail, not a highway.



I AM the plant, surviving despite its all-consuming thirst.

I am the bird, singing as it beats with its broken wing.



MY only dereliction will be if I let a day pass that does not bear my imprint upon it, that does not carry my royal insignia, my coat of arms.


✧
IT were a misfortune to have friends until I have learned in my loneliness not to be lonely;

Or to have wealth, until I am rich without it.

✧
THERE are two ecstasies. One is "En route!" The other is "Arrived!"

✧
AND if you are determined, I will stand aside, for I but delay the day.

I will be here waiting for you when you get back from hell.



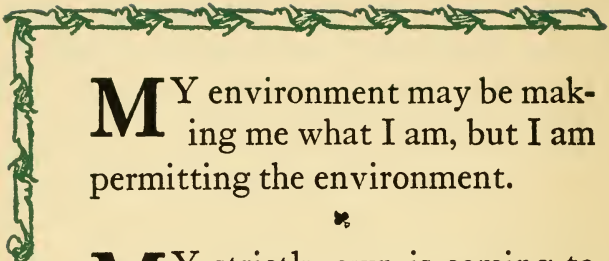
I AM a stone, indifferent to
look upon, dull, and without
the fire of life, but one day one
will come by who will raise me
to an angle in the light.

I am a reed, mute and insen-
sate, but one day the wind will
touch me, and I will sway with
vibrant melody.

I WILL not ask for succor, but
for increased strength.

My burden may be great, but I
will be greater.

I WILL endure the martyrdom
of right, but when I am
ground down and swept under
by a martyrdom to wrong, I will
call myself by my right name,
“Fool!”



MY environment may be making me what I am, but I am permitting the environment.



MY strictly own is coming to me every hour, and if that which I crave does not come, it is because I have never made it mine.

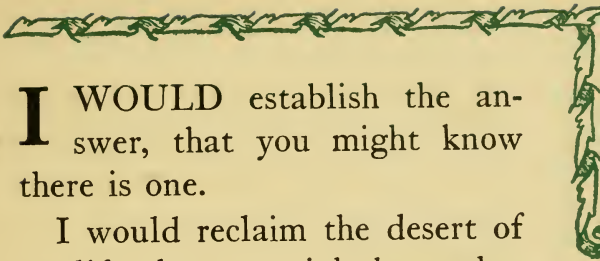


I AM the sunlight to the soil of my own soul.

I am the warm rains, and the maturing days and nights.



I PRAYED that blessings might be bestowed, and then one day I learned that they could only be evolved.



I WOULD establish the answer, that you might know there is one.

I would reclaim the desert of my life, that you might know that barren sands may bloom.



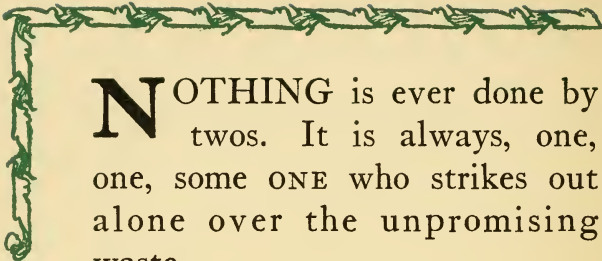
MY house and garden may be an alms-house and its environs, and my well-filled garner may be a sign, not of my wealth, but of my impoverishment.



I MAY be lost in the underground of life, but I will trust my soul to know the passages.



I WILL not argue my rights. What is mine is incontestable.



NOTHING is ever done by twos. It is always, one, one, some ONE who strikes out alone over the unpromising waste.

It is always the whitening bones of some ONE.

✧

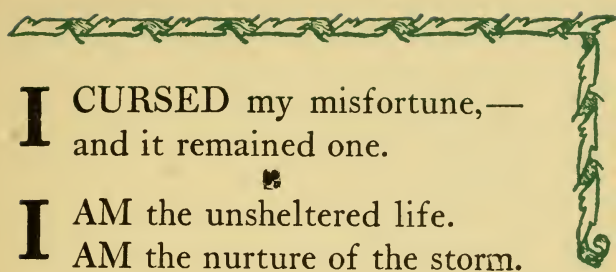
I LABORED on my bended knees, but the rags on which I knelt became a prayer rug.

✧

IT WENT in a Sorrow, but through the alchemy of Self, it came out a Song.

✧

I MAY be blind, and halt, and lame, but what matter, if the Great Equalizer has given me wings.



I CURSED my misfortune,—
and it remained one.

I AM the unsheltered life.
I AM the nurture of the storm.
I am the enrichment of poverty.
I am the all-sufficiency of him
who must pass alone.

I am the fearlessness of him
who has encountered many foes.

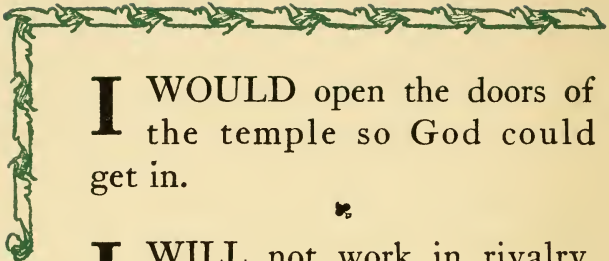
I am the strength of him who
has had much to combat.

I am the ruggedness of him who
has grown up through rocks.

I am the unsheltered life.

I AM working the soil. Those
who come after will find the
points of the plow-shares.

I am fighting the fight,—they
will find the moldering scabbard.



I WOULD open the doors of
the temple so God could
get in.

✧

I WILL not work in rivalry,
but I will labor to transcend
myself.

✧

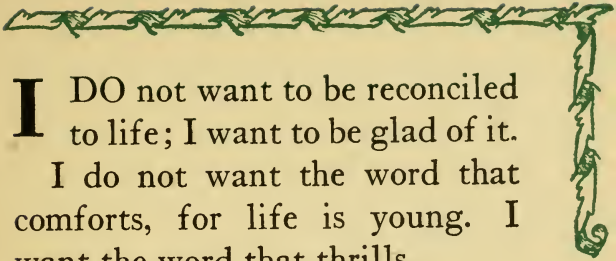
BEAUTIFUL Death! Sweet
transition! — a wild violet
growing on my own grave.

✧

TO MAKE of one's self a
sounding-board of the Di-
vine, a harp of life, vibrant, and
sweet, and healing.

✧

ONE day I shall come through
Fields of Peace, up past the
Hills of Joy.



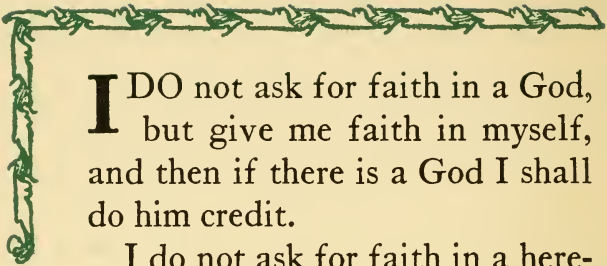
I DO not want to be reconciled to life; I want to be glad of it.

I do not want the word that comforts, for life is young. I want the word that thrills.

I WILL not look at the man who has lost both feet, and then console myself that I still have one on which to hobble, but I will look at the man who has both feet and wings, and then look at myself and weep.

IF I shall have an existence there, is too remote. That I have one here, is all-important.

That I may have an immortal soul, is irrelevant. That I have a mortal one, is vital.




I DO not ask for faith in a God,
but give me faith in myself,
and then if there is a God I shall
do him credit.

I do not ask for faith in a here-
after, but let me believe in today,
and no hereafter can present that
I shall not be well prepared.

I HAVE sharpened the shares,
and harnessed an increased
force, for I have determined to
plow the furrows deeper, and
turn up new layers of life.

YOU did not teach me life.
You taught me its business
and tricks. You taught me the
piece of white glass, while I
sought the blue-white diamond
of being.

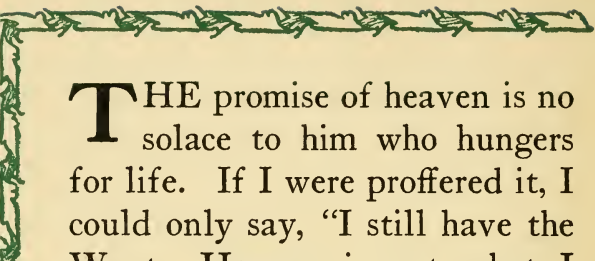


I WILL give and give, to your
deep need, but not to your
selfishness.

TO SAIL [♥]on wings of un-
restraint, there where there
is no chart of the skies!

WE WORK [♥]and wait and
pray that our own shall
know our face, but we shall have
often to subdue the heart's lone
cry, else our own shall find us with
a foundling in its place.

IT IS [♥]that one crying in the
wilderness that gives life its
poignancy. Who would not for-
sake all the stars in the firmament
and go in search of the lost
Pleiad?



THE promise of heaven is no solace to him who hungers for life. If I were proffered it, I could only say, "I still have the Want. Heaven is not what I seek."

❖

I MPORTUNED the gods,
and got a beggar's desserts.

❖

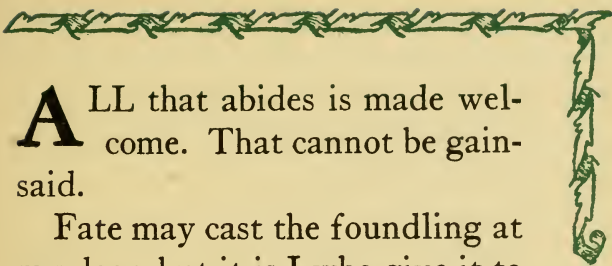
I AM the well-born, — I transcend my pedigree.

I am that one saved from himself to posterity.

I, myself, am the nucleus of a new race.

I have overcome the distortions of the womb.

I have established myself, regardless of a thousand years.



ALL that abides is made welcome. That cannot be gain-said.

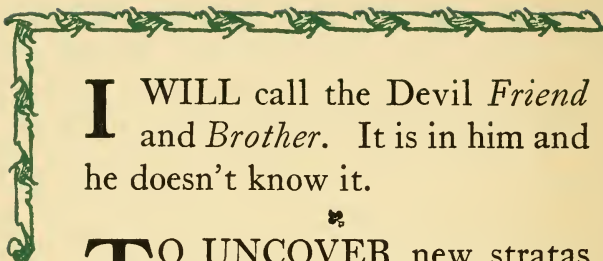
Fate may cast the foundling at my door, but it is I who give it to suckle at my breast.

I FED myself, body, mind, and soul, into the maw of my surroundings, and I thought I was a great martyr. The only thing great about it was the great mistake.

I AM the slave, else how could I sing of freedom?

I am the oppressed, else how could I sing of deliverance?

I am that that is, looking away to the hills to that that ought to be.



I WILL call the Devil *Friend*
and *Brother*. It is in him and
he doesn't know it.

✻

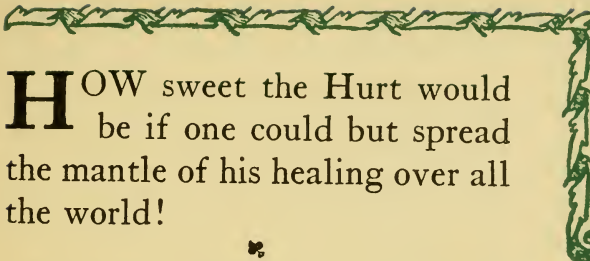
TO UNCOVER new stratas
of myself. To drill down
to unknown levels. To uncover
beds, and veins, and pockets down
in the untried depths.

✻

LIFE consigned us all to the
pit, and she knew that there
were those who would weep, and
go, and those who would laugh at
her, and stay.

✻

WHEN I moan in agony of
body, you may heal me, but
when I moan in agony of soul, I
must heal myself.



HOW sweet the Hurt would
be if one could but spread
the mantle of his healing over all
the world!

❖

ONE'S "Peace, be still!" will
not comfort until it has first
been spoken to the turbulence of
his own soul.

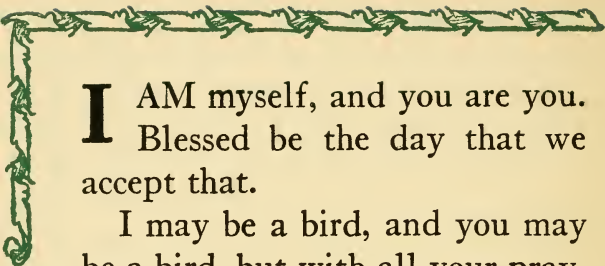
❖

TO GO wrong is sometimes
the surest way to go right.

It is not always down to
depths: it is down, sometimes, to
heights. I got my first perspec-
tive of heaven from hell.

❖

THE hindrance may be colos-
sal, but so am I. It will be a
match of Goliaths.



I AM myself, and you are you.
Blessed be the day that we
accept that.

I may be a bird, and you may
be a bird, but with all your pray-
ing, you may not be as I,—with
scarlet wings.

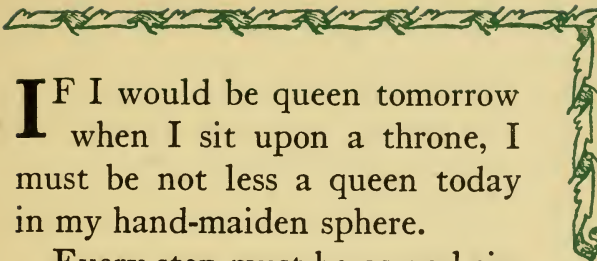
And you may be a reed, and I
may be a reed, but, though I die,
I may not be as you,—a lute.



I AM the seer coming into his
vision.

I am the dreamer on the edge
of his dream.

I am the prophet nearing his
promised land.



IF I would be queen tomorrow
when I sit upon a throne, I
must be not less a queen today
in my hand-maiden sphere.

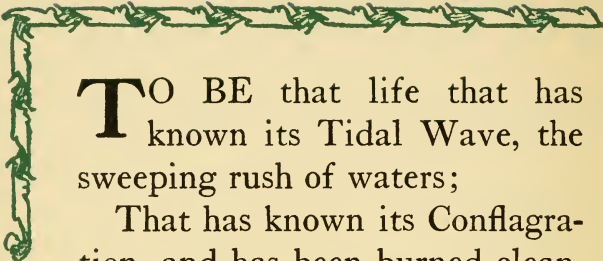
Every step must be as an heir-
apparent walking toward her
crown.



WHATEVER I pledged for
myself in my wildest ex-
travagant moments shall be the
truth for me. Talk not to me of
sober estimate, — I set a daring
limit when drunk with expect-
ancy.



I WILL leave some sign that I
came by, — my initials carved
upon the bark of the tree of life.



TO BE that life that has
known its Tidal Wave, the
sweeping rush of waters;

That has known its Conflagra-
tion, and has been burned clean.



LIFE does not coerce. The
voice that calls is still and
small, and the hand that beckons
is as a shadow hand.




MAY not the elusive quick-
silver long to be the beaten
gold of life?



I NO longer ask the approval
of the throng. It is not es-
sential.

The violet cannot change its
hue, though its heart break.



I DO not ask to be delivered
from the burden of life, —
only from its over-burden.

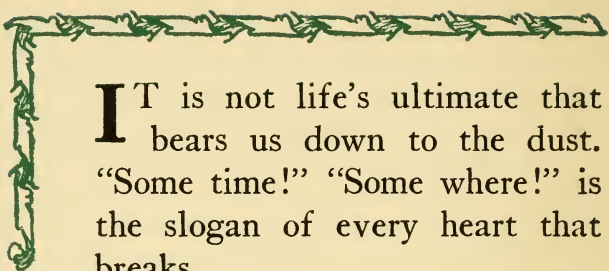
Gladly would I toil in the mill,
—it is the tread-mill we pray to
be delivered from.

I would tax my strength to
its full, but we tax it to the
breaking.

TO give the reins to life!
O loosen it from its leash,
and know its free and unrestricted
movement.

To reach out and out, and feel
not the tightening of the thong.

IT may be I cannot change my
environment, but my location
may be changed.



IT is not life's ultimate that
bears us down to the dust.
"Some time!" "Some where!" is
the slogan of every heart that
breaks.

✻

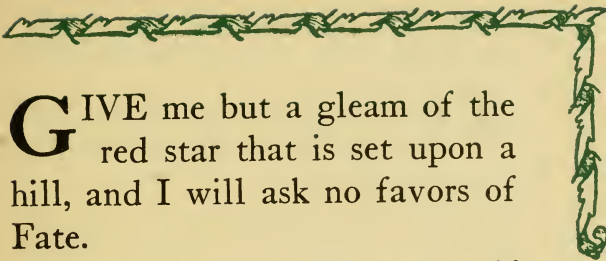
I ATTRACT what I am.
Life will have vasty barren
places until I cover my own desert
with green.

✻

I HAVE picked up the grains
that lay outside the door, but,
oh! to enter into the garner house,
where there is life abundant.

✻

LIFE remains so long in the
narrows, until one day —
that is the day! — we sail through
the straits, out to the open sea.



GIVE me but a gleam of the
red star that is set upon a
hill, and I will ask no favors of
Fate.

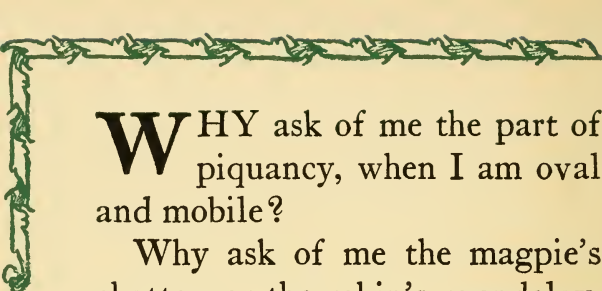
I will ask no guide nor stay, if
I may but have the gleam.

IT is only the long and patient
road that leads to anywhere.

ONE passed through and came
bearing balm and ointment,
and one passed through, and came
with a curse.

TO BE in the front ranks,
marching to the music.

To be the glorified pedestrian,
with the transcendent look in his
face.



WHY ask of me the part of piquancy, when I am oval and mobile?

Why ask of me the magpie's chatter, or the robin's roundelay, when I am the night-bird, with its single cry?

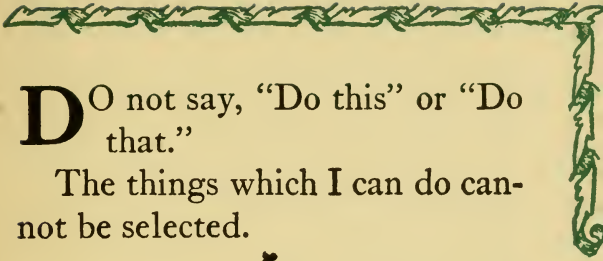


ONCE I set out on my way, I must win my right to go on.



THE tragedy is if I become limited by another's limitations, and unfixed and undone because another is unfixed and undone.

I am my own ultimate hindrance, but in the meantime I may have much else to overcome.



DO not say, "Do this" or "Do that."

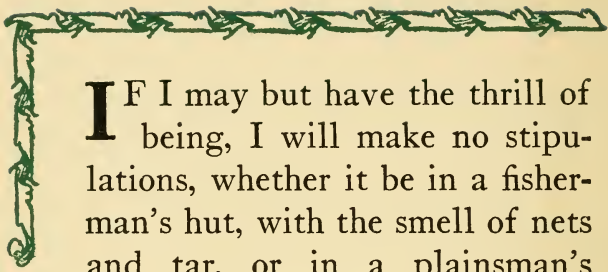
The things which I can do cannot be selected.

I HAVE wandered far upon the desert plain, but in my heart a bird keeps singing, and the daffodils beckon and blow,—and one day I shall wander back.

TO know the unobstructed life!

To tear down the walls that confine me, and have unrestricted movement in unbounded spaces.

I AM the cocoon in process, but one day I will lift up my gorgeous golden wings, and you will have learned of me.



IF I may but have the thrill of being, I will make no stipulations, whether it be in a fisherman's hut, with the smell of nets and tar, or in a plainsman's cabin, with the wide expanse for friend, or in the furrow, with the feel of the warm earth on my feet.

I will make no conditions, if I may but have the thrill.

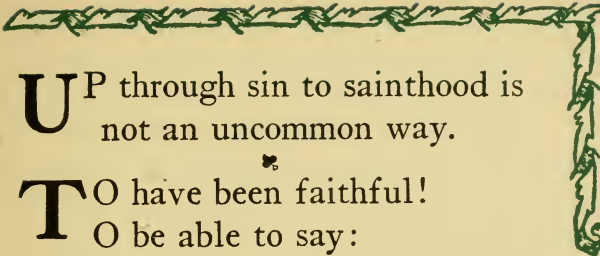


I AM the strength that was born of my weakness.

I am the steadfastness that came out of my wavering.

I am the joy of living that was born of my despair.

I am the poise that was born of my great unrest.




UP through sin to sainthood is
not an uncommon way.

TO have been faithful!
O be able to say:

“I have done the thing, and I
have put all of myself into it. I
have done it with all the brawn
of my hands, with all the warmth
of my heart, and with all the glow
of my soul!”

YESTERDAY’S weaving is
as irrevocable as yesterday.
I may not draw out the threads,
but I may change my shuttle.

I DOUBT my own progress
when the time is far removed
since I have said of myself, “O
Fool!”



IN the hey-day I painted the spirit of the free, unfettered flight, and men passed it by, but later I painted the shadow of the broken pinion, and they came to look.



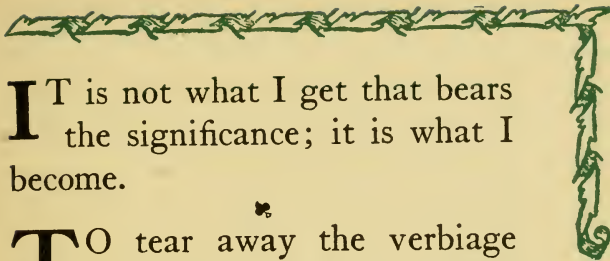
IN TENSITY of desire will always find a way, just as weakness of purpose will always find an excuse.



I WEEP, and throw myself against the iron bars of life, imploring to be let in, but life can neither let me in nor keep me out.



IF we would live for a cause, we get our chance to die for it.



IT is not what I get that bears
the significance; it is what I
become.

TO tear away the verbiage
and speak that one word
that is truly myself!

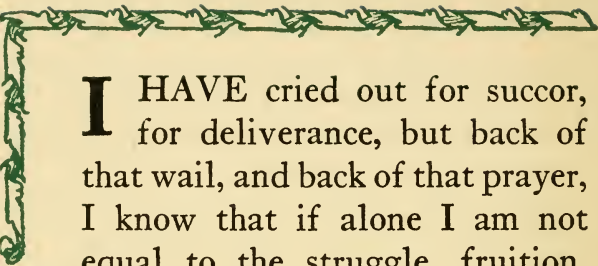
TO be stripped of all vanity,
and stand forth a naked
soul!

I HAVE wandered far.
I AM a long, long way from
home.

It is I back there at the turn of
the road, my other self, waiting.

It is I who peer away into the
distance.

It is I waiting for myself to
return.



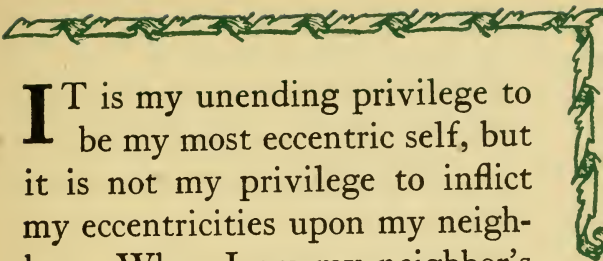
I HAVE cried out for succor,
for deliverance, but back of
that wail, and back of that prayer,
I know that if alone I am not
equal to the struggle, fruition,
too, will need a stay.



YOU see only this endless
stretch of water, this un-
broken waste of life, and you
pity me. But hold! One day
the waters will tremble, the earth
will quake, and a new world will
be heaved up out of the sea.



THAT which becomes bound-
en becomes a burden, though
it were erstwhile coveted. Only
in free action is there joy.



IT is my unending privilege to
be my most eccentric self, but
it is not my privilege to inflict
my eccentricities upon my neigh-
bor. When I am my neighbor's
guest, I will leave my cats and
my parrots behind in my own
domain.

❖

SO long I dwelt in discord
that I became attuned to
strife.

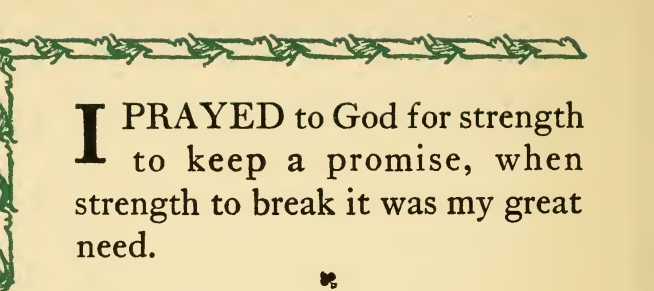
So long I played life out of
tune, that my perverted ear was
keyed to dissonance.

❖

I AM the eleventh hour.
AM the foam-flecked horse.

I am the reprieve.

I am the glint of light through
the cleft in the wall.



I PRAYED to God for strength to keep a promise, when strength to break it was my great need.

❖

WHO goes far will go without guide or map.

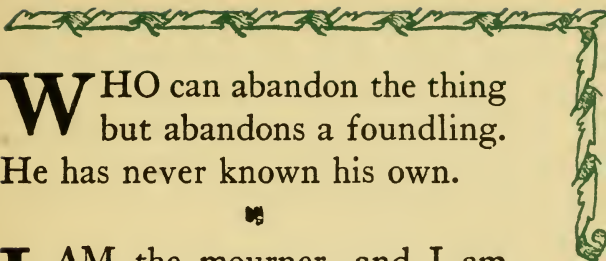
❖

ONE is stultified and stupefied with over-abundance, with too much,—and has not end or aim of being.

And another starves,—while his zealot's soul leads him madly on.

❖

THE lambs of my own fold are bleating in the deep wood. That is how I know the call of desolate mother ewes.



WHO can abandon the thing
but abandons a foundling.
He has never known his own.



I AM the mourner, and I am
the dead in life, but I am the
comforter, and I am the resurrec-
tion. I will not let myself forget
that.

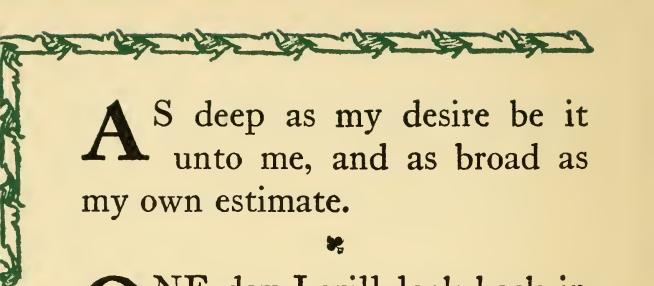


WHEN yesterday is dead, I
shall bury it.

My onward march is over new-
made graves.



TO CARRY the burdens of
strength, and not the bur-
dens that are imposed, or that
gravitate, because of lack of it!



AS deep as my desire be it
unto me, and as broad as
my own estimate.



ONE day I will look back in
retrospect, and I will say,
either, "I have done," or, "I might
have done." The world is of
these two kinds.

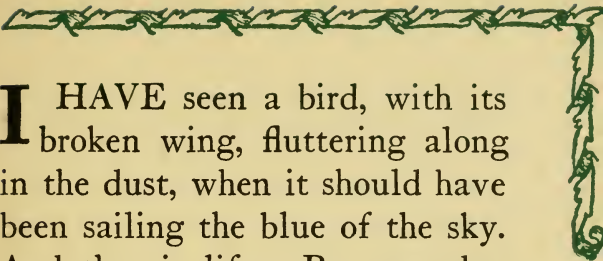


CONDITIONS may make
some men, but some men
can make conditions.



I SHALL not fear want of ac-
tion, but if want of inspira-
tion should be my lack!

To lose the urge, the desire,—
that is the fatality.



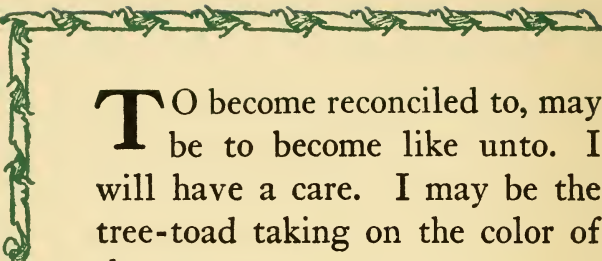
I HAVE seen a bird, with its broken wing, fluttering along in the dust, when it should have been sailing the blue of the sky. And that is life. But one day the Wonder-worker touches it, and makes it whole, and it sails up to the very heart of the sun.

✽

WE pray for fruition, when, if our prayer were answered, our all-too-soon-ripened fruit would be worm-mellowed and wind-blown.

✽

MY endurance may be born of courage, but I will not forget that it may also be born of that most pitiable of human things,—weakness.



TO become reconciled to, may
be to become like unto. I
will have a care. I may be the
tree-toad taking on the color of
the tree.



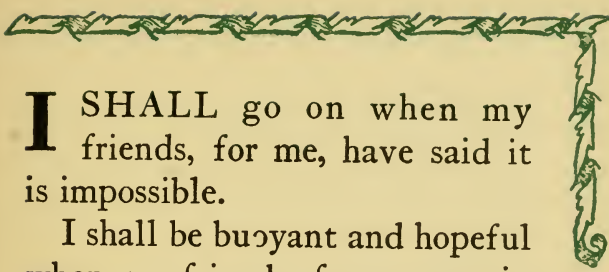
IT is not what I make of my
house, or my garden, but what
I make of me. My house may
collapse, and my garden may
sink into the sea, but between
myself and me no accident can
intervene.



I MAY withstand the test of
going without, but will I
withstand the test of having?



TO be big! big! To have an
all-inclusive growth.



I SHALL go on when my friends, for me, have said it is impossible.

I shall be buoyant and hopeful when my friends, for me, are in despair.

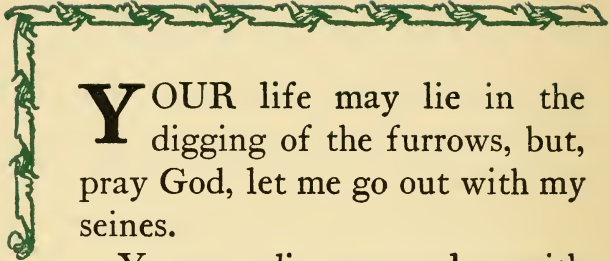
I shall fight on and conquer when my friends, for me, have lain down and died.



IT cannot possibly be to my discredit that I believed in you, but it may be to your shame.



WHEN I yield and am ground under, I am not yielding to your strength, but to your weakness, which is destroying both you and me.



YOUR life may lie in the digging of the furrows, but, pray God, let me go out with my seines.

You may dig your soul up with the soil, but mine I must lift up in my net with the fishes.

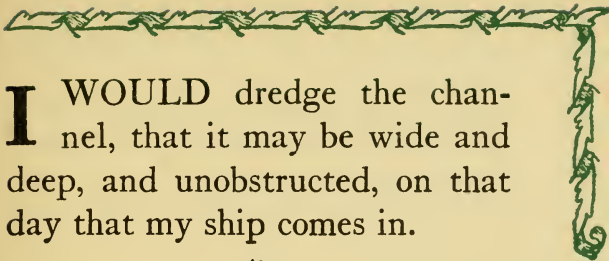


MY prayer need not be deeper for strength to bear adversity than for capacity to withstand success.

I prayed to be kept sweet in poverty, but I would go down on my knees and pray to God to keep me sweet in wealth.



LIFE could have withheld her lash, but she did not wish me to die in my sleep.



I WOULD dredge the channel, that it may be wide and deep, and unobstructed, on that day that my ship comes in.



LIFE knows the price we must pay for the things worth while, and in her long-sightedness she lets us pay.

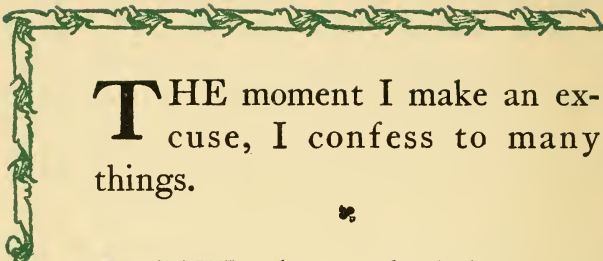


IT is written in the stars—when I myself shall write it there with lofty hand.



I WILL loosen my clutch upon those things which are not mine, which I hold fast by grip of will.

My own will abide.



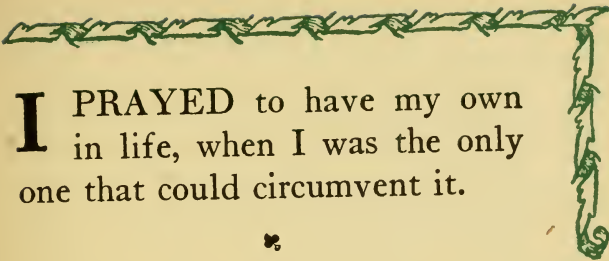
THE moment I make an excuse, I confess to many things.



I SAW a log pushed down under the water, and it came up, and I saw it pushed down again, and it came up again,—and again,—and again. But there came a time when it was waterlogged, and it went down to the bottom to stay. And I thought of life, and I tried to pray.



I WOULD follow the trail with the faith and abandon of a child who believes that a pot of gold lies at the rainbow's end.



I PRAYED to have my own
in life, when I was the only
one that could circumvent it.



I WILL keep the promise I
have made to myself.

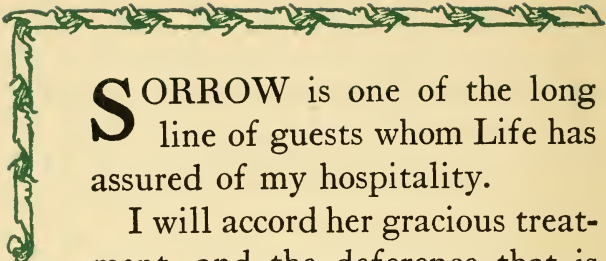
I will keep the faith and the
covenants.

I will not betray myself into
unfulfillment.



I WOULD not wish to arrive
if I should forget the way I
came.

I may sing my song trium-
phant, but it is the memory-note
of pain that establishes it as
truth.



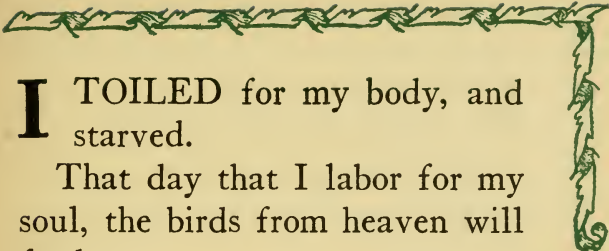
SORROW is one of the long line of guests whom Life has assured of my hospitality.

I will accord her gracious treatment, and the deference that is her due.

She is not an interloper, nor an enemy within my gates. She is my sad-meined guest, and I will walk softly in the majesty of her gray presence, and she will smile upon me with the benign smile of a mother fostering the soul of her child.

❖

I SAID I could have done the thing, had the obstacles been removed, but after all else had been cleared away, there would still have been myself.



I TOILED for my body, and
starved.

That day that I labor for my
soul, the birds from heaven will
feed me.

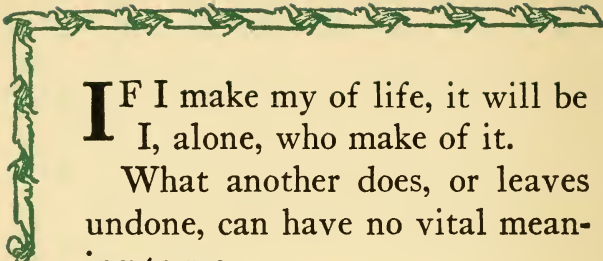


GLADNESS sings its songs,
but the words that live are
crushed out.



HAD I done the thing that
was indicated, the bolts
would have been withdrawn, and
the doors would have opened.

I would not have wandered, as
now, an alien, without a homing
hearth.



IF I make my of life, it will be
I, alone, who make of it.

What another does, or leaves
undone, can have no vital mean-
ing to me.



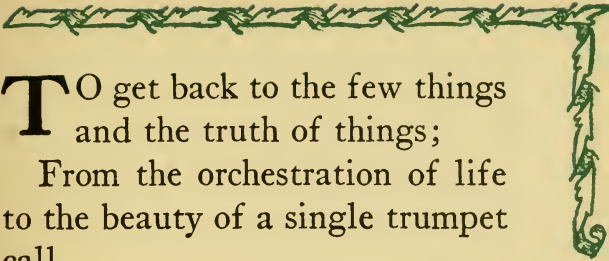
I SAID I did not have time,
but to what did I give the
time, and was it a fair exchange?



SHALL I be the pack-horse,
dragged and dead, without
mettle or life, the tired animal,
young, yet faded and blighted
and old?

Have I not right to freshness,
and buoyance and grace?

Am I the slaughter of the
shamble, or am I a temple of the
living God?



TO get back to the few things
and the truth of things;

From the orchestration of life
to the beauty of a single trumpet
call.

✧

THE opportunity to live my
life was always present, but
the courage was not.

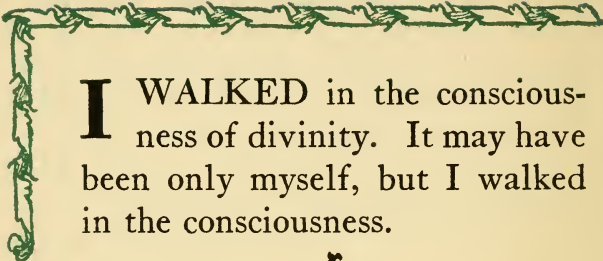
I bemoaned conditions, when I
should have bemoaned merely the
faint heart within me.

✧

I WILL hasten the day to cut
the thongs that bind a mis-
shapen life, lest, too long con-
fined, it never regains its sym-
metry.

✧

TO but once taste the bowl of
the overflowing life!



I WALKED in the consciousness of divinity. It may have been only myself, but I walked in the consciousness.

✻

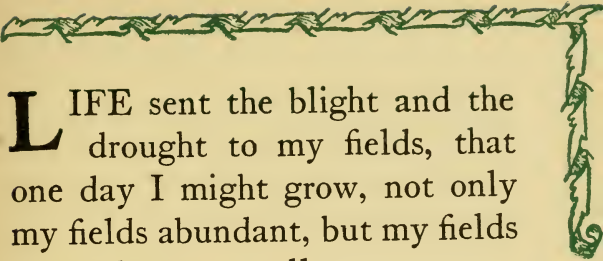
YOU tell me you could do this, or that, but I do not believe you. Great power to do has great impelling force.

✻

I SAW a cross on the mountain-side, white and holy in its repose, and on approach I found that it was a fissure in the earth, a scar, a nature-wound, which had been healed and anointed.

✻

I AM the ointment.
I AM the healing to my own life.



LIFE sent the blight and the
drought to my fields, that
one day I might grow, not only
my fields abundant, but my fields
triumphant, as well.

✧

ONE day life will be culled,
and all that is irrelevant
and without meaning will be cast
out.

✧

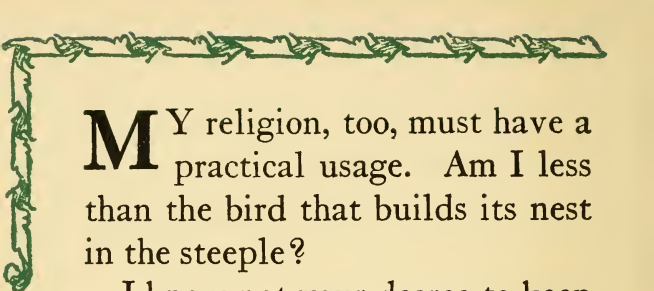
TO be open to the kindness of
life.

To be open to the softness of it.

To be open to its great friendli-
ness.

✧

I AM not the sacrifice.
TOO am a god to be ap-
peased.



MY religion, too, must have a practical usage. Am I less than the bird that builds its nest in the steeple?

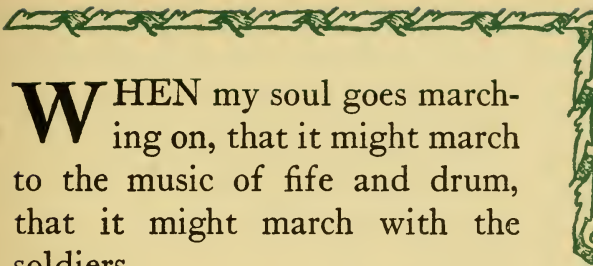
I know not your decree to keep the Sabbath day holy. Go tell it to the brook. It will chortle at your implied desecration of the other six.



WRITE me as an herb-gatherer, and say the soil I dug was my soul.



WHEN will I leave off dancing the Dance of the Manikins and dance the Dance of Me?



WHEN my soul goes marching on, that it might march to the music of fife and drum, that it might march with the soldiers.

When taps are sounded, that it might be that a soldier's soul is passing.



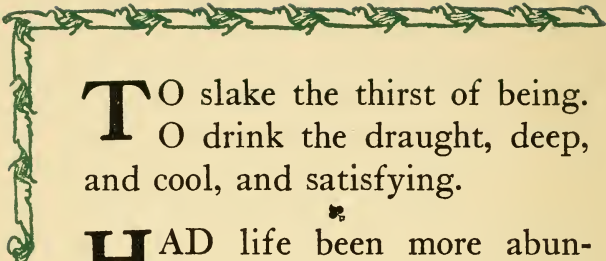
IT went in brackish and unclean, but it came out the filtration of life.



TRULY, life is by the sweat of the soul!



I SIGHED for a kingdom to rule, when I could not put on my own coat and hat with mastery.



TO slake the thirst of being.
O drink the draught, deep,
and cool, and satisfying.

✿

HAD life been more abundant,
I could not know the
deep craving that comes from the
sparsity of it.

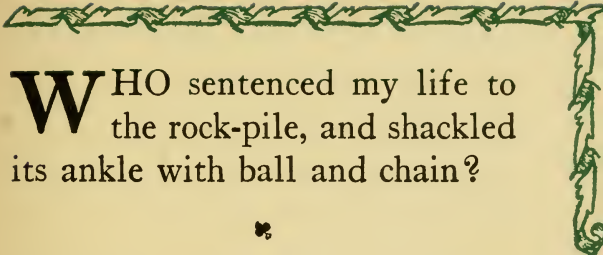
Had it been more verdant, I
could not know the desert's pain.

✿

I MAY grow flowers in my
garden which you do not like,
but the pity is if I allow you to
trample them out.

✿

THERE is a time when the
voice says, "Come away!
Come away!" and we heed it not,
and all the years we wonder what
is the matter with life.



WHO sentenced my life to
the rock-pile, and shackled
its ankle with ball and chain?

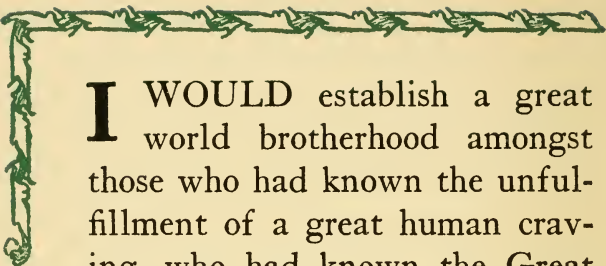


I WOULD have the things
that I desire, to prove my
power, and then I would have
the capacity to forego them, to
prove my greatness.

I would achieve all things, and
yet I would be so rich and suffi-
cient within myself, that I could
forego the fruits of my achieve-
ment.



TO have life while one can
make it sing merrily, not
quaveringly.



I WOULD establish a great world brotherhood amongst those who had known the unfulfillment of a great human craving, who had known the Great Want.

I AM the song of the bird
whose nest is robbed.

I am the flight of the eagle with
the broken wing.

I am the body washed ashore,
that went out to its brother at sea.

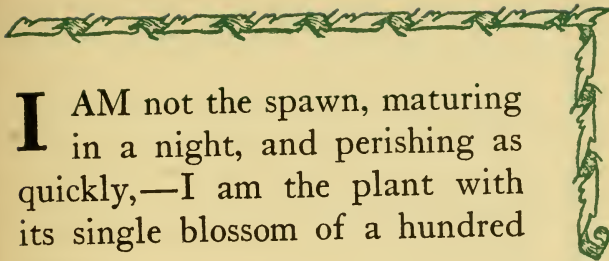
I am the thief on the cross.

I am the plaint of the pain.

I am the sacrificial altar.

I am life at its best and worst.

I PRAYED for endowment,
but I wrongly prayed. It
was the awakening that I sought.

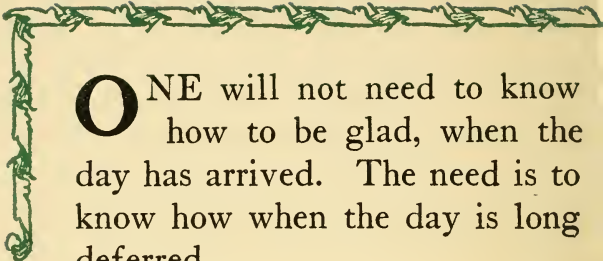


I AM not the spawn, maturing
in a night, and perishing as
quickly,—I am the plant with
its single blossom of a hundred
years.

I am not the hours between
the sun's rising and its setting,—
I am an epoch, marking the open-
ing and closing of a cycle of time.

TODAY I live between nar-
row hills, but tomorrow I am
the plainswoman, a habitat of
vast places.

NOT a Magdalen but has the
composite face of a Ma-
donna, and not a scarlet woman
but has the breasts and milk-
glands of a mother.



ONE will not need to know
how to be glad, when the
day has arrived. The need is to
know how when the day is long
deferred.

✧

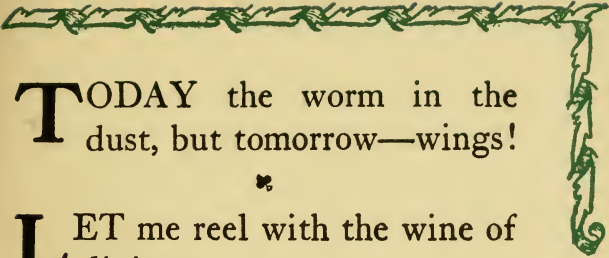
TO beat them over the heads
with clubs, may get obedi-
ence, but to beat them over the
hearts with love, will get
miracles.

✧

I GREW fast to a thing in my
weakness, not in my strength.
What I needed was the sharp
edge of a cleaver between.

✧

TO feel life, to have the con-
sciousness of it, as a mother
feels the turning of her babe in
the womb.



TODAY the worm in the
dust, but tomorrow—wings!



LET me reel with the wine of
living.

Let me swoon in the poppy-
fields of life.

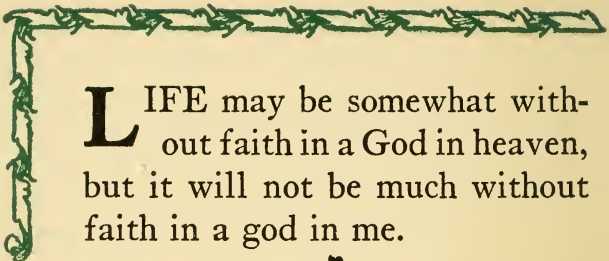
Let me be overcome by the
heavy, narcotic presence of the
days.



NOT those who have life
know its tragic meaning,
but those who have missed it,
afar, afar.



I HAVE stayed too long with
a task that fed an alien hun-
ger, and starved my own soul.



LIFE may be somewhat without faith in a God in heaven, but it will not be much without faith in a god in me.

✻

I DO not ask you to help me, but I would appreciate it if you did not hinder me.

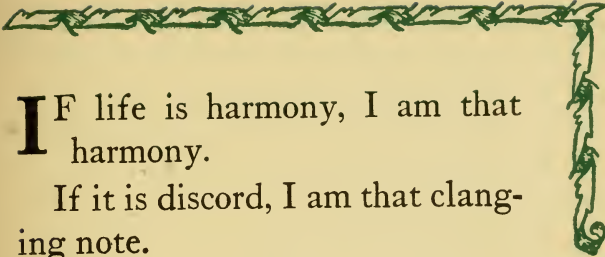
✻

THAT day that I am crucified and buried in the tomb, I shall try to remember the day that the stone rolls away.

✻

HAVE I made of life a treadmill, forever stepping but never getting on?

Have I made of it a wheel flying round and round, but unbelted and without end or aim?



IF life is harmony, I am that
harmony.

If it is discord, I am that clang-
ing note.



HE is truly exalted who can
say, "There is not one be-
neath me."



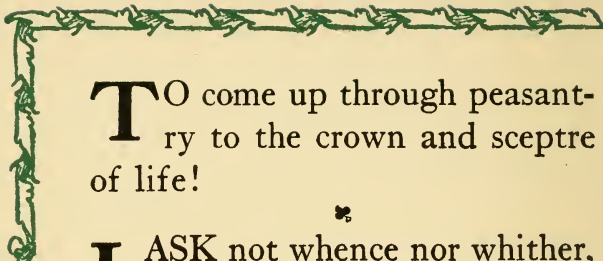
WITH the same zeal that I
seek freedom will I avoid
trespassing.



LIFE never lost its savor. It
was I who lost my taste.



TODAY I lie in the dust, and
every heel is upon me, but
tomorrow I shall look down from
shafts of light.



TO come up through peasant-
ry to the crown and sceptre
of life!

✧

I ASK not whence nor whither,
I glad that I may not know, if
only here and now I to myself
may be revealed.

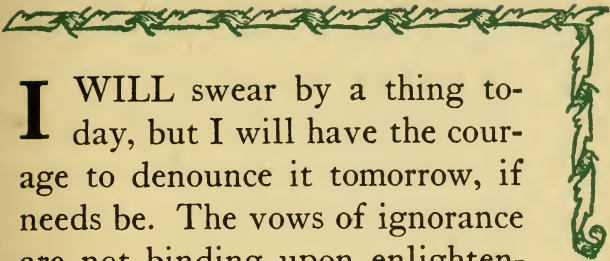
✧

I CRY for the light to break,
while all the time the light is
shining. Courage to follow it is
my great need.

✧

I MAY swear by you today,
but tomorrow you may have
passed from your own recogni-
zance.

I may plight you my troth, but
nature may forswear the vow.



I WILL swear by a thing to-day, but I will have the courage to denounce it tomorrow, if needs be. The vows of ignorance are not binding upon enlightenment.



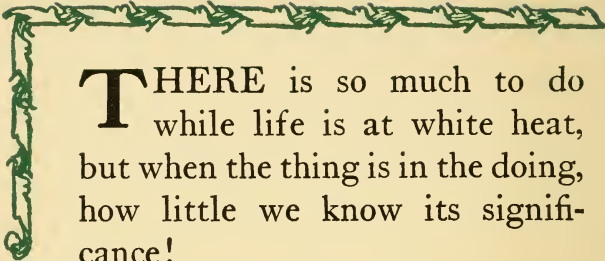
I DID the thing, and that is how I know how courageous it would have been not to have done it.



SHALL I let a worm of the earth destroy my faith in the sun, the moon, and the stars?



I WOULD fulfill my wildest dream of material possessions, that I might hear my soul wailing through marble halls.



THERE is so much to do while life is at white heat, but when the thing is in the doing, how little we know its significance!

We drive life to the black veil, and we do not know it, and to the shamble, unawares.

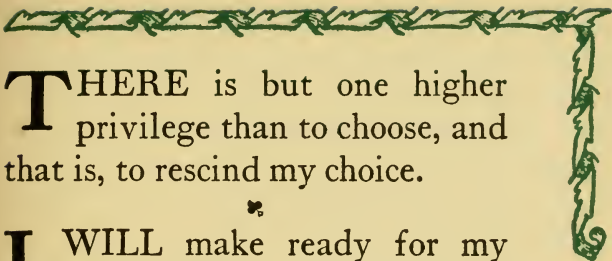


GIVE me that fabric which bears the finger-marks of the weaver, whose thread is the fiber of character, and whose design is the impress of soul.



I WOULD be a builder of empires.

I would fell the forests, and bridge the chasms, and set a new survey upon the land.



THERE is but one higher
privilege than to choose, and
that is, to rescind my choice.

✧

I WILL make ready for my
Day of Fate, and whether in
that day my ship comes in, or
whether my ship goes down, I
will make ready, I will prepare.

✧

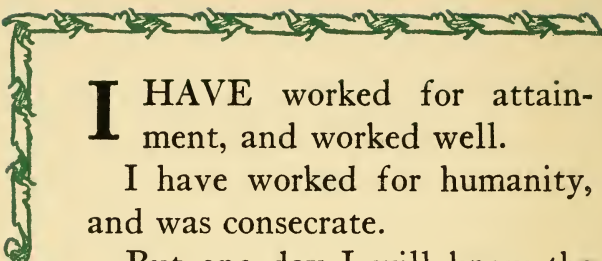
WHO pursues the vision
must go alone and without
counsel.

Who follows the voice must be
his own interpreter.

✧

TO be at-one with humanness!
To ebb with its ebb, and
flow with its flow.

To be attuned.



I HAVE worked for attainment, and worked well.

I have worked for humanity, and was consecrate.

But one day I will know the divinity of toil, — in that hour that I labor for my own soul.



I AM the magnet, and that that is mine will cleave.

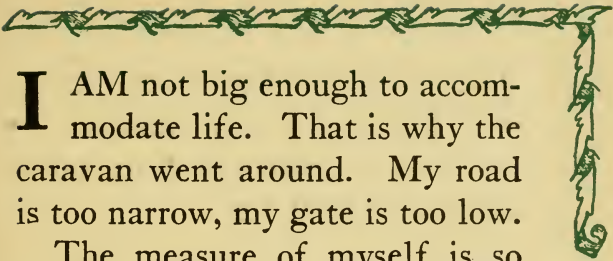
I am the waiting earth, and all in its own good time the fruit will ripen and fall.



THE truly great and generous man pardons every fault but his own.



THE man of strength knows his own fallibility.



I AM not big enough to accommodate life. That is why the caravan went around. My road is too narrow, my gate is too low.

The measure of myself is so meagre, and that is all I can take.

✧

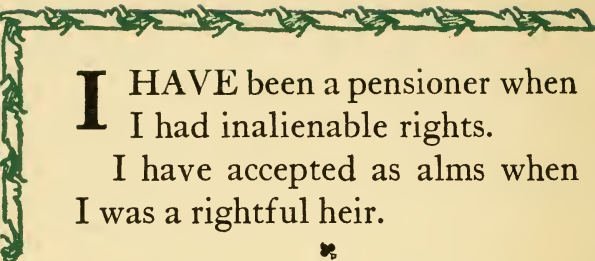
LIFE may be ready with her offerings, but she knows by my impatience that I am not prepared.

She gives her best gifts to those who could get on without them.

✧

THOSE who have come out into the open have felled their way out.

Those who have struck the vein have drilled down through layer upon layer of shale, and rock, and hopelessness.



I HAVE been a pensioner when
I had inalienable rights.

I have accepted as alms when
I was a rightful heir.



WHAT matter that I came
across the desert with a
pack on my back, so that I ar-
rived?



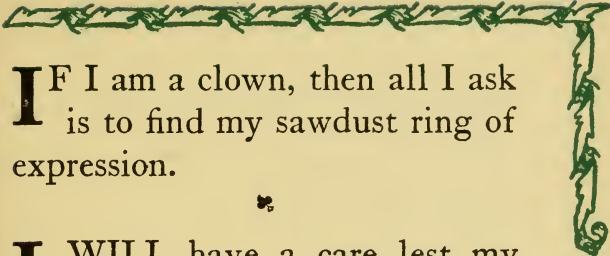
I AM the vassal of the Divine.
I am the Christ, bearing the
message to my own life.



LIFE lets us do the thing we
are determined to do.

If we are strong, she lets us
claim the hostage.

If we are weak, she does not
stay the wheels.



IF I am a clown, then all I ask
is to find my sawdust ring of
expression.



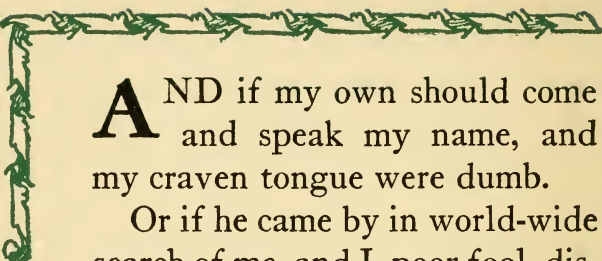
I WILL have a care lest my
burden rest all too long where
my wings might have grown.



TO WIN brings its own buoy-
ancy, but he is the god-man
who can yet be glad, though he
stake all and lose.



IF living life loses me my phi-
losophy and my faith, there is
something wrong, not with life,
but with my philosophy and me.



AND if my own should come
and speak my name, and
my craven tongue were dumb.

Or if he came by in world-wide
search of me, and I, poor fool, dis-
guised, were passed.

Or if he came by in his coach
and six, and a donkey cart were
tied at my door.




THE rose speaks only its rose
language.

It emits its rose fragrance, and
lives its gracious rose life.

And I, the sun-flower by the
garden wall, I will learn of the
rose.

I will lift up my gorgeous sun-
shine head and be glad.



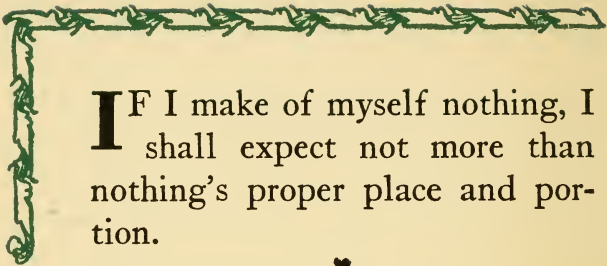
IF I answer the stranger at my gate while my own cry within, — perhaps my own is at the gate, and the strangers are within.

IF I drink the hemlock, it is because I have sat long hours over the fire brewing my own bitterness.

I WOULD rather have faith that here and now will be complete, than faith that heaven is the answer.

I would rather walk this day with joyous heart, than to believe that in fields Elysian the burden of my life would roll away.

I AM the suppliant, and I am the god that answers prayer.



IF I make of myself nothing, I shall expect not more than nothing's proper place and portion.



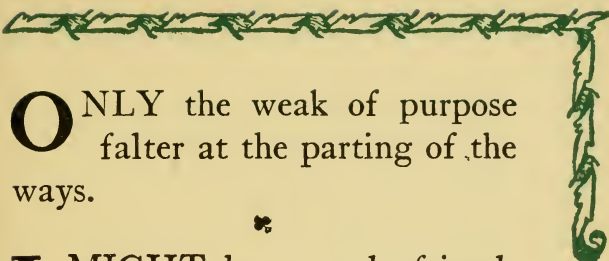
I MAY say that this or that thing came unbidden to my hearth, but it is of the retinue of my invited guest.




ONE will forgive the long, parched lanes, and remember them only kindly, once one has arrived at green fields.




YOU thought you knew life because you sailed its sea triumphant, but I knew it because I went down in a wreck.




ONLY the weak of purpose
falter at the parting of the
ways.




I MIGHT have made friends
with life, for we have come a
long ways together.



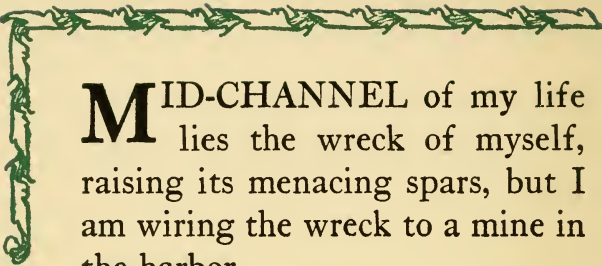
LET me be lusty and virile,
that the thing that I do may
be strong in the mesh.



WHILE the black slough
mud can send forth lilies
to blossom on its breast, I shall
not despair.



GIVE me that life that is
seamed and riven with
living.



MID-CHANNEL of my life
lies the wreck of myself,
raising its menacing spars, but I
am wiring the wreck to a mine in
the harbor.



I AM a soul in process.
AM life in the making.

I am a weaver with shuttle and
thread, and back in my loom the
design begins to show.

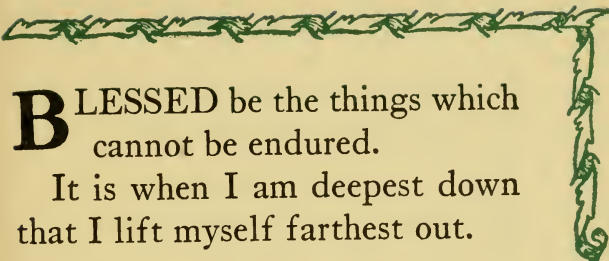


ONE day Life will bless the
sacrament of the days.

She will robe me in her vestry,
and anoint me, as one who enters
holy orders.



I MAY not set you free. It is
not a gift, but a growth.



BLESSED be the things which cannot be endured.

It is when I am deepest down that I lift myself farthest out.

✧

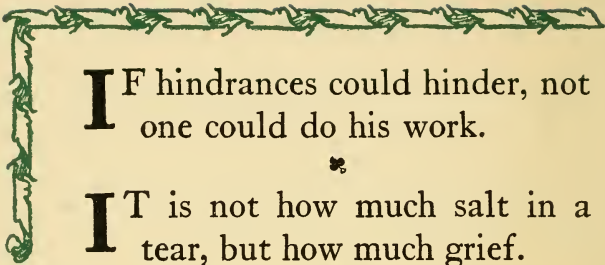
I MAY give a thousand reasons, but when all is said and done, just write, "vascillating and weak of will."

✧

I WOULD stand the test of the primitive folk, who know the taste of unsalted food.

✧

YOU tell me to do this, or that, or that another thing would better please, but do you not know that I must do the thing I can?



IF hindrances could hinder, not
one could do his work.

✿

IT is not how much salt in a
tear, but how much grief.

✿

TO be lifted up and out, into
Life's unrestraint and big-
ness!

✿

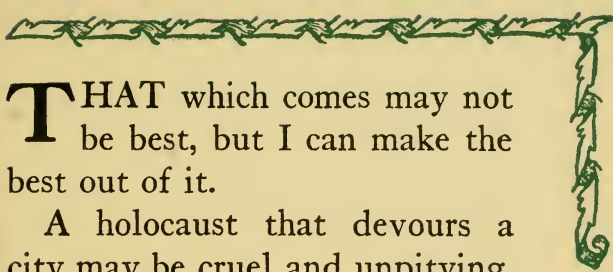
TO one day know the taste of
that for which, through long
years, we have starved.

To sit down to the feast of
Deferred, Withheld, and Forbid-
den things!

✿

LIFE is life, until it is what
we make of it.

Hemp is hemp,—until it is a
life-line or a hangman's rope.



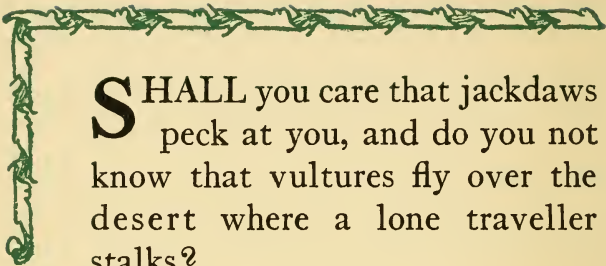
THAT which comes may not be best, but I can make the best out of it.

A holocaust that devours a city may be cruel and unpitying, but the new city may rise, a glory.

THAT another does less, or has less, shall bring no solace to me. I shall find no joy in comparative states.

What is lacking in my life is lacking, and the contemplation of another's greater misfortune, or imperfections, shall work no sickening compromise with me.

ONE day I will count my possessions, and they will include me.



SHALL you care that jackdaws
peck at you, and do you not
know that vultures fly over the
desert where a lone traveller
stalks?

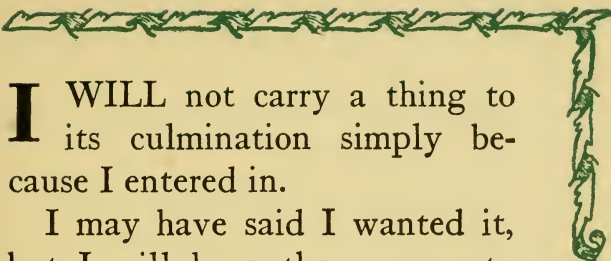
SOME give their cast-off coats,
and some the coats from their
back.

And some give bread alone,
and some give bread and tears.

I SEEMED to be doing the
thing for you, but primarily
it was my own soul to save.

I invited you into the warmth
of my hearth, but it was I who
must be warmed.

I gave you to drink, but it was
I who thirsted, and to eat, be-
cause I, too, must be fed.



I WILL not carry a thing to its culmination simply because I entered in.

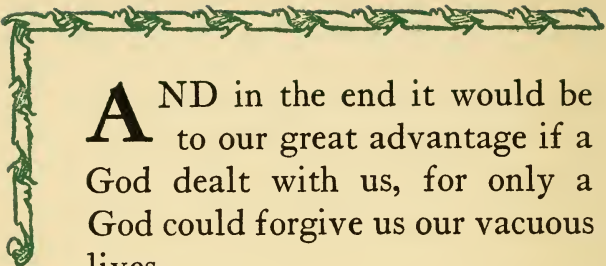
I may have said I wanted it, but I will have the courage to say, "I have changed my mind."

THE route is all the same, only the end is different.

We all come down the same long lanes, through the same wildernesses, across the same deserts, up through the same valleys, and over the same hills. The way is all the same. Only the end is the individual's.

WHO does much will relinquish a great deal.

It will bear the virile marks of sacrifice.



AND in the end it would be to our great advantage if a God dealt with us, for only a God could forgive us our vacuous lives.

✧

WE carry our burden on and on, until one day, suddenly, we laugh and set it down upon the ground.

✧

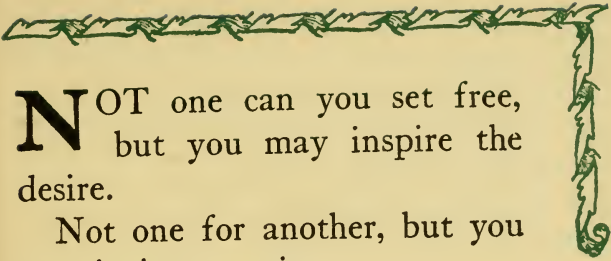
IT is not outer conditions, but inner impoverishment, that limits me to this meagre supply.

✧

WHILE I might find pleasure in your approval, your disapproval will not deter me.

✧

TO comprehend, to accept, and to be glad!



NOT one can you set free,
but you may inspire the
desire.

Not one for another, but you
may incite to action.



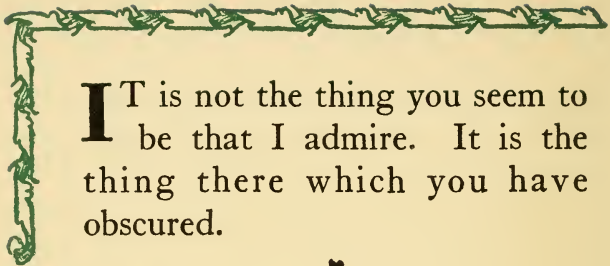
HEREDITY is much, en-
vironment is much, but I
am much more.



I WILL have the courage to
do the thing that I am im-
pelled to do. I will not faint,
nor falter, nor "by your leave."



THE incoming may still my
heart's weeping, but only
that which I send forth will still
the deeper cry of my soul.



IT is not the thing you seem to be that I admire. It is the thing there which you have obscured.



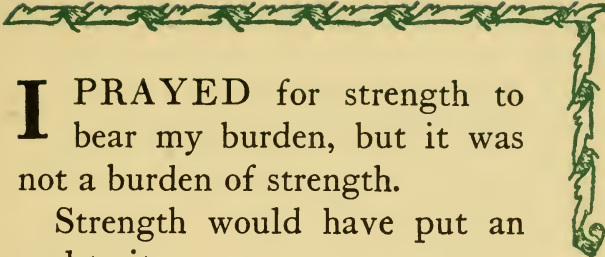
WHO would not die, and die again, if he might also rise in resurrection?

Who would not suffer to be nailed to the cross if he might ascend into his heaven and sit at his Father's right hand?



TO be delivered from myself!
From my one self, the Enemy, and to my other self, the Friend;

From my one self, the Prodigal, to my other self, the Return.



I PRAYED for strength to bear my burden, but it was not a burden of strength.

Strength would have put an end to it.



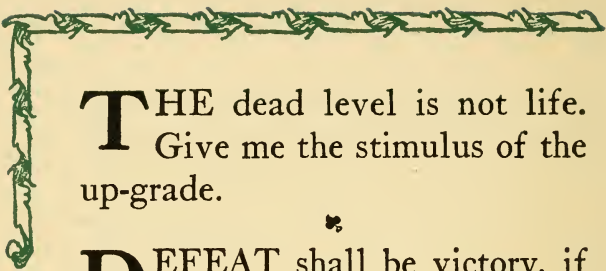
ONCE I said I would rise up and cast it off, before the forces gathered. I would not forget the giant whom the Lilliputs destroyed.



TO one day read the pages of life, and subscribe to what they contain.

To accept what was;

To stamp it with the stamp of my approval, and accept it with my sign and seal.



THE dead level is not life.
Give me the stimulus of the
up-grade.

✿

DEFEAT shall be victory, if
I may live and die an en-
thusiast, buoyant to the end.

To die in failure, if one may
yet die in faith!

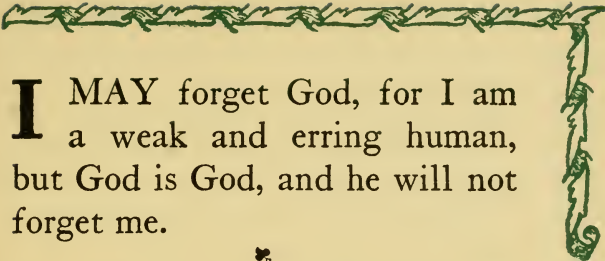
✿

IF my spontaneity does not fit
the code, I will forego the
code.

✿

I MAY never find the thing I
seek, but maybe you will have
caught the spirit of my dream.

I may never set foot upon my
Promised Land, but maybe you
will go on.



I MAY forget God, for I am
a weak and erring human,
but God is God, and he will not
forget me.



LIFE is a tragedy to those who
really live her.

She is a levity not even to the
clown,—only to the fool.

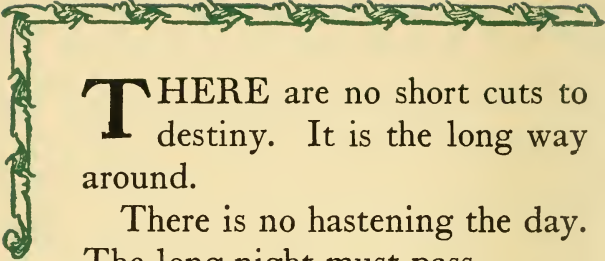


I WILL not take my wares to
the palace door, but outside
the gate, where the peasants pass.

Mine to supply a want, not to
relieve a surfeit.



ONE day to collect the scat-
tered fragments of myself,
and give them symmetry, and
wholeness, and use.



THERE are no short cuts to destiny. It is the long way around.

There is no hastening the day.
The long night must pass.



THE gift comes not back to him who surfeits, and gives of what remains, but to him who gives of half the cup that barely was enough to slake his own deep thirst.



NO narrow wall shall confine me, and no depressing roof shall mark my poverty. I am rich and limitless, for mine is the depth of worlds, the height of skies, and the width of the far horizon.



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